



View from the Blackdown Hills

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Villages to escape expansion after inspector overturns EDDC Local Plan decision

DUNKESWELL Parish Council has praised district officers for support given during the East Devon Local Plan process.

The praise came after a government inspector ruled that Dunkeswell, near Honiton, and Chardstock, near Axminster, are not suitable for ex-

pansion to meet housing land supply targets.

As part of the Local Plan process, a 12-criteria assessment was used to determine which villages were suitable for expansion.

The criteria included whether each respective community had basic fa-

by Anders Larsson

cilities such as a medical practice, general store, post office, primary school, public transport and so forth.

Villages that are deemed suitable are classified as Sustainable Communities.

East Devon District Council (EDDC) officers

concluded that Dunkeswell, as well as Chardstock, did not meet the criteria to be on the list of Sustainable Communities.

Dunkeswell Parish Council expressed delight, so reacted angrily when EDDC councillors disagreed and formally included the village along with Chardstock

on the list.

In its formal response to the Local Plan consultation, the parish council wrote: "Dunkeswell Parish Council is extremely concerned at the last minute addition, against the officers' recommendation, and despite not qualifying to proceed even to the second stage of scoring, that

our parish suddenly become one of the few selected communities which undergo a boundary review process during the summer months to facilitate future development."

The parish council were pleased to hear the government inspector's final ruling.

A statement issued by Dunkeswell parish clerk Tracey Bell, said: "EDDC officers had not included the two parishes on their list of Sustainable Communities.

"But EDDC Councillors decided to add them to the Sustainable Communities list without the necessary evidence at the EDDC planning meeting shortly before the elections last year.

"The communities then had to make representation to the inspector to have them removed.

"EDDC officers have supported us completely throughout the process.

"This is quite an important decision in terms of protecting our AONB landscape from larger scale development, and will now allow both parishes to complete their Neighbourhood Plans."



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Scouts go wild in the great outdoors

NINE members of the Explorer section from 1st Hemyock Scouts and leaders were joined by three members from Bradninch for a 24 hour outdoor survival camp.

The regular Friday night meeting included being shown how to skin and clean a rabbit and pluck and gut a pheasant as well as discussing details such as dealing with hyperthermia and hypothermia.

After spending the night at their meeting room the boys and girls tucked into a breakfast of porridge after being woken by a leader banging saucepans together. A kit inspection and pat down ensured there was no hidden contraband – each Scout was only allowed to take six items which had to include their sleeping bag and a sharing item – before starting the walk along mainly footpaths via Wellington Monument to the

overnight camp site in a wood.

Following the previous very wet evening finding a place to sleep was the first priority. A tarpaulin was tied between two trees and the Scouts started to build fires and prepare their evening meal of pheasant using the knowledge they had learnt the day beforehand.

Lunch consisted of one slice of bread. Prior to leaving the hall each Scout had been given one potato and one carrot and these were cooked in a communal pot with the birds roasting over the fires.

Although a couple of Scouts used hammocks, with two Bradninch Scouts falling out during the night, most slept under the tarpaulin. Daybreak saw them packing up and taking a shorter walk back to Hemyock where they were collected to return home to a hearty breakfast.



■ SCOUTS pictured after camp

Skydivers jump for joy at 50th birthday



■ SKYDIVERS after completing a jump

THRILL seekers are jumping for joy as this year marks the 50th anniversary of skydiving at Dunkeswell Airfield.

The first skydiving to take place at the airfield was by Col Goldsworthy who started a Royal Marines skydiving school in 1966.

Over the years the airfield has seen three other skydiving schools continue jumps over the airfield, with Skydive-Buzz Ltd being the latest to offer thrill seekers skydiving at Dunkeswell.

The school is owned by Jason Farrant who has logged 9,000 plus jumps.

More than £1million is raised for charities through sponsored jumps each year and it is now the second busiest skydiving school in the UK.

Major accomplishments to take place at the skydiving school during the past 50 years includes the Royal Green Jackets complete the first eight man star link up in free fall over the UK back in the early 70s. The airfield still holds skydiving records with the Royal Marines World record 22 Night canopy stack built in 1985, World record 24 stack built in 1986 and a British 34 free fall star record built in 1987.

Other Guinness book skydiving records had been established over the airfield such as the oldest tandem jumper Edward Royd-Jones 84, the most skydive tandem jumps completed in a day, but all have since been beaten.

However, the skydiving school hopes to make another Guinness world record attempt in June for most skydive tandems completed in a day. The school is aiming for 450 and currently 250 people have signed up.

Over the years 20 skydivers from Dunkeswell airfield have gone on to become British National Champions with some going on to represent Great Britain winning Silver, Bronze at the World CRW Championships and gold at the 1st World CRW cup.

2015 was a busy year with 28,000 descents taking place, over £1million in sponsorship raised for more than 200 charities, and with 4,900 first timers taking the plunge.

The school also continued its relationship with TV companies and saw the stunt for the TV program "Saved" recently shown on TV filmed over Dunkeswell.

Chief skydiving Instructor Andy Guest over saw the stunt with school owner Jason Farrant carrying out the stunt involving him dangling outside the plane by a static line.

The skydiving school at Dunkeswell is hoping for another packed year in 2016 and are currently working with the British Parachute Association to try and offer jumps from 25,000' wearing oxygen at a later date.



WI celebrate 70th birthday

■ AWLISCOMBE WI is celebrating it's 70th Birthday this month, with several special events.

The group (pictured) recently celebrated the achievement with a lunch at the Harbour View in Sidmouth dressed in 1940's clothes.

A group of the members also went to a talk at The Beehive recently about Honiton suffragette Juanita Maxwell Phillips, who lived in Awliscombe house and is buried in Awliscombe churchyard.

The WI have also planted a Lucombe Oak tree to commemorate the 70 years the Awliscombe branch has been running.

WI member Heather Penwarden said: "With more than 40 members of all ages Awliscombe is still a thriving and active WI. The tree was planted by some of our longest standing members who joined aged 16 when introduced by their mothers."

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Police teams join forces to target drivers

POLICE Officers from Honiton, and surrounding areas joined forces to carry out vehicle stop checks in partnership with the Vehicle Inspectorate and HMRC in East Devon.

This is a regular operation run by rural East Devon neighbourhood police teams and targets unroadworthy vehicles, anti-social drivers and travelling criminals.

The operation took place around Dunkeswell and Monkton near Honiton.

One driver was dealt with by HMRC for using 'red' diesel in their vehicle with a £500 penalty, two immediate

and one delayed prohibitions were issued by the Vehicle Inspectorate, one driver was issued with a Vehicle Rectification form for an illegal vehicle registration plate.

More than 35 vehicles were stopped in total with very minor issues being dealt with by words of advice.

A police spokesperson said: "This operation demonstrates the commitment that Rural East Devon Neighbourhood police teams have in relation to making local roads safer and dealing robustly with those drivers whose behaviour endangers others."

Workshop fire

A COMBINED office and garage in Dalwood has been badly damaged following a fire.

Firefighters from stations in Axminster, Colyton, and Honiton were mobilised initially.

The combined unit, located in a caravan park, was 50 per cent destroyed by fire.

The cause of the fire was accidental.



PICTURED are cheque recipients and charity shop volunteers

Church charity coffee shop helps local causes

ST Mary's church charity and coffee shop in Hemyock opens to villagers and visitors three times a month and raises money for local good causes.

Each year a percentage of takings are donated to charity. Last month a good size group of folk turned up at the church room to browse, buy, enjoy coffee and homemade cake before presentations were made.

This year's recipients were the 1st Hemyock Scout Group; primary school PTFA and a donation to what is hoped will bring a defibrillator to the parish.

The donation to the Scout group will be put towards the Hemyock/Danish camp due to take place this summer, the money for the school will be spent on outside learning.

During the coffee morning, thanks were expressed to Hilary Clements, the recently retired editor of the village magazine 'The Parish Pump'. Three years ago the magazine was entered in a competition where it came 22nd out of over 700 entries.

Unbeknown to Hilary it was entered again this year and to her great delight came in at 17th position.

Man dies in farm accident

A 61-year-old man has died after becoming trapped under a lorry near Yarcombe.

Emergency services were called to South Waterhayne Farm to reports of a man being trapped underneath an overturned grain lorry.

The ambulance service brought its hazardous area team, trained to work on casualties who may be trapped, stuck at height or in water.

A police spokesperson said: "The 61-year-old man was treated by paramedics but pronounced deceased at the scene a short time later."

"The Health and Safety Executive has been informed."

Skills of the Hills returns

THE 19th annual "Skills of the Hills" takes place later this month.

The annual hedgelaying competition, organised by the Blackdown Hills Hedgelaying Association, will take place on Saturday, March 12th at Westhayes Farm, Hemyock by kind permission of Jon and Lorna Pring.

The Neroche Woodlanders from Young Wood will be a major part of the event this year, providing a range of different activities for our younger spectators.

Craftsmen from the local area will be demonstrating green woodworking skills making items with materials from the hedgerow and coppice. There will also be a demonstration of turf banking being used to restore a damaged section of Devon bank.

An expert guide will be on hand to walk around the competition, talking through the Devon style of hedgelaying and describe what the competitors are doing.

There will be hot food and refreshments provided by the Smeatharpe WI.



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Storm Imogen brings further floods to village

HEMYOCK had to batten down the hatches as Storm Imogen brought gale force winds and heavy rain to the village last month, leading to further flooding.

The parish church erected two flood barriers with The Catherine Wheel pub putting one up at their entrance as St Margaret Stream, which runs alongside, both became a torrent of raging water.

At the lower end of the village the River Culm flooded fields as well as the road.



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Blackdowns clubs and organisations

Blackdown Hills Transition Group

TS that time of year again when there is Spring in the air and gardeners turn their attention to preparing what seed they will need for the start of the new growing season.

Gardeners and allotment holders have always tended to share their expertise and knowledge including seeds but increasingly local communities are widening this to include all of us with a bit of garden by holding a seed swap. They tend to small-scale affairs in settings where people naturally congregate usually the village hall.

There are many reasons to support a local seed swap. For example they are a way of keeping costs down, as purchasing seed gets more and more expensive. Often you can't use all the seed in a packet so why not swap some of the seed with someone else who has a variety you would like to grow. Swapping seed also assists in preserving heritage varieties and challenging the dominance of the big seed companies who would prefer you to buy seed from them every year and generally sell varieties that cannot grow viable seed. Seed swaps also provide a venue for getting to know which varieties grows best in your local soil conditions and for swapping organic stock.

The Blackdown Hills Transition Group has been hosting seed swaps for the past five

years. This year we will be hosting a table at Churchinford Farmers Market on March 5th in the village Hall 10am to 12pm, and at Dunkeswell Farmers Market, Throgmorton Hall, a week later on March 12th, again 10am to 12pm. So why not come along with any seed you want to swap in small envelopes and see what you can find. Don't worry if you don't have seed to swap for a small donation you can take some of what is available donated by other gardeners.

Blackdown Hills Transition and Honiton Transition Group also hosts "View and Chew" every 3rd Thursday of the month at the Beehive Centre Dowell Street, Honiton EX14 1LZ.

On March 17th and April 14th the film being shown is "Growthbusters". There is an opportunity to view a film related to environmental issues and have a discussion with others about the issues raised.

The cafe / bar will be open for drinks and snacks from 6.30pm and film starts around 7pm.

Further information is available from Tim Clewer 07701053491 t.clewer@gmail.com

Contact us also via the Website www.blackdownhillstransition.org

Jim Rogan, Chair Blackdown Hills Transition Group

Tulips from Amsterdam inspire flower arrangers



Important news from the Blackdown Hills Business Association board of directors

After 14 years Val Baker will be stepping down as co-ordinator of the BHBA. Val has played a key role in building the BHBA from small beginnings to the successful membership organisation that it currently is. We can't thank her enough for the care

and dedication she has shown to the members.

With an exciting programme of events planned for the coming year we are seeking an individual who is proactive and self-motivated to take up the mantle.

Blackdown Hills Business Association Coordinator

This is a part time, flexible role which is home based offering around £5000 - £7000 to cover the core tasks of running the BHBA (including organising events and supporting its members) with the potential opportunity to increase hours through the development of the membership.

The applicant will have excellent administration, organisation, communication and IT skills and a full driving licence.

To register your interest in this position, email Andrew Lovering a.lovering@homecall.co.uk. A full description of the role and details of how to apply will be sent to you after 1st March 2016. The application deadline is the 14th March 2016.

For more details go to the BHBA website at www.bhba.org.uk
or email Val at info@bhba.org.uk or tel 01823 681484

WITH spring fever in the air ladies from all over Somerset and Devon recently filled Combe St Nicholas Village Hall, near Chard, with hundreds of tulips from Amsterdam.

At the first of a new series of flower arranging workshops, there was no doubt that the spring season was on its way.

Somerset tutor, Jackie Nicholls from Ashville Design who runs the

workshops said: "The village hall was awash with some of the most stunning tulips I have ever seen. Both sessions saw an abundance of enthusiasm and excitement from everyone who came along."

"Modern flower arranging these days is very uplifting, therapeutic, infectious and fun – and the perfect tonic for anyone who at this time of the year is feeling a bit

stressed or lonely. Best of all you don't need any experience to have a go."

The next workshop at Combe St Nicholas Village Hall will be making a "Spring Posy" on Monday, March 14th from 10am-12.30pm.

For more information contact Jackie on 01460 67795 or 07906 259 683.

Blackdowns clubs and organisations

Bishopswood Ladies

The February meeting was opened by Mary Gusterson who welcomed the speaker Dr Charles Hill, a local man who had stepped into the breach at short notice.

Armed with some of his collection of photographic slides he demonstrated his knowledge and love of trees and woodlands.

The first tree to colonise the English landscape was the birch, followed by the juniper, and this can be seen today in some of our heathlands. Several slides showed some of England's oldest trees, very gnarled and ancient specimens of great historical interest. The Woodland Trust is now endeavouring to set up a Register of trees of National and Specific Interest.

He talked about the flora and fauna of woodlands. There are six species of deer living wild in the Great Britain today but the red and roe deer are the only native species. The damage caused by grey squirrels was mentioned, as they are fond of stripping the bark of some trees, especially in the summer when it is sweeter. This can sometimes even cause the tree to die. He suggested that we might try eating more squirrel!

So many more interesting facts were learned about various fungi, and also the intricacies of tree

root systems; altogether a fascinating talk.

Reports of various group activities included a local six mile circular walk from Bishopswood Chapel to Lower Fyfett and back, with a lunch stop of soup and bread at a member's house. The walk was mostly along narrow lanes to avoid the mud at this time of the year. The walkers were blessed by a beautiful sunny day.

The 'skittlers' were entertained by the Short Mat Bowls Club and discovered that the game is more difficult than it looks. Much hilarity and enjoyment was had on both sides. The bowls club thanked the ladies for the very enjoyable evening, including excellent refreshments.

Blackdown Hills Gardening Club

THE Blackdown Hill Gardening Club met at Churchinford Village Hall in January for its first meeting of 2016.

Chairman, Graham Salmon, welcomed everybody and oversaw the election of the committee for 2016. The re-elected secretary Jane Hunt, circulated a beautifully produced programme of presentations and visits for the year.

The first talk, on February 17th, titled 'Designing with Plants' was

by the award winning garden designer Marion Dale. This will be followed on March 16th by a talk by Katherine Crouch, a local garden designer, on 'Plants that should be Known Better'.

Members are all looking forward to visits to Hestercombe Gardens in June and a guided tour of River Cottage Gardens in August.

Details of the year's presentations and visits can be found on the Blackdownsonline website. www.blackdownsonline.org.uk - events.

The chairman then gave members an entertaining talk on the specialist flora that he found on his last plant trip, in somewhat challenging conditions, in the unspoilt countryside and Caucasus mountains of Georgia.

Having said that, some of the more interesting plants were found in land dumps and roadside verges. Now is the time to get ahead in the garden, the seed and bulb brochures have arrived.

If you want to meet some experienced Blackdown gardeners and vegetable growers who know the local weather and ground conditions then come and join us.

The best knowledge is gleaned during the time spent socialising during refreshments and the raffle at the end of the meeting.

Meetings are at Churchinford Village Hall starting at 7.30 pm. We hope to see you.

Hemyock WI

PRESIDENT Lyn Taylor welcomed members and a visitor to the meeting in Forbes Lounge. Members queued up to pay their subscriptions as the January meeting was replaced by a meal at the Ashill Inn, so no transactions could take place there. However, Lyn and the secretary Cindy, soon sorted out the business.

Names were checked for the county quiz at Broadhembury and the beauty day in Exeter.

Names were invited for a delegate at the spring council meeting in Torquay and on April 13th and the national AGM in Brighton on June 11th.

The monthly competition for the March meeting, when David Pugsley is the speaker, will be for Easter Biscuits. Everyone was given the recipe as this will be the competition at the group meeting at Updown on March 24th.

Competition winners that night were Pat, Marie and Maureen who had brought interesting money boxes. The flower of the month winners were Marie and Maureen who tied for first place. The reading group will meet at Marie's house and the lunch club are going to St Petros College in Tiverton on March 2nd.

It was now 8pm and time for a fascinating talk by Dr Gavin Haig who had come from Bampton to talk about 'The Trials and Tribulations of a Surgeon'. Gavin had decided at quite an early age that he thought medicine could be a career for him. He passed the 11plus and went to a school where Classics were considered important, so when he did get a place at Barts, other A Levels had to be studied and passed. This he managed to do, but when he suggested that he would like to become a 'Surgeon', he kept being discouraged. But he was determined, and with help and encouragement from Donald Barlow, FRCS, at Southend General Hospital and Geoffrey Fisk of St Margaret's Hospital of Epping and Harlow as well as George Qvist FRCS of the Royal Free, he did reach his goal. He met many interesting characters in his career and related interesting incidents. With the help of Judith and Brenda, he was able to il-



lustrate the way in which one of the surgeons worked.

Hemyock WI meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 7.30pm in Forbes Lounge. More details from Lyn Taylor on 01823 681592.

The photo is Judith about to receive 'an injection' from Gavin, but as one of his senior colleagues used to do it!

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MerryMakers' pantomime delights Membury

IF done well, there is really nothing quite like a village pantomime, and the Membury MerryMakers certainly lived up to their name with their entertaining production of Armada.

This story was a new variation on the genre, and Nat Bruzon's book was both interesting and funny, with a mixture of familiar historical figures and regular panto lynchpins to hold the plot together.

Many had made the effort to venture out to the village hall on an inhospitable evening to support this hilarious and highly entertaining group of performers, and for much of the show the audience was skilfully used as part of the cast.

To open proceedings 'the virgin' Queen Elizabeth, played by Simon Foster, moulded the perfect blend of wit and foolery to set the tone. Along with the dashing Sir Walter Raleigh (Serena Lumley), the pair milked every last inch of innuendo out of the script and, with the meaty partnership of McDonald



■ MCDONALD, Flossie, Wimpey and Georgia

Review by Nicky Sweetland
Photos by John Stevenson

and Wimpey (Ron and Judy Martin), provided some really high-quality comedy moments.

The thigh-slapping hero Sir Francis Drake was expertly played by Kirsten McIlroy who, with a great voice, led her band of able seamen in the quest to defend the English shores from the impending threat of a Spanish invasion. Jack (Flora McIlroy) made a better companion than spy but when coupled with his beloved Anna (Lauren Shepherd) performed a delightful rendition of the Troggs classic song Love Is All Around.

Their Spanish foes were a formidable bunch led by turncoat Richard Clutterby (Sam Dare) but, as is customary with all good fairy tales, all turned to the good side in the end.

King Philip was played by Robbi Robson and Princess Carolina by Lynette Burrough. Katy Henderson's Duke Parma was a joy and the young actress is without a doubt a star of the future.

That wasn't the only young talent on show with Henry Dare as William Shakespeare and Imy Payne as Georgia Ramsey showing their mettle and the feisty Jacinta and Juan (Lydia Hartnell and Tyler Payne) performing with style.

The supporting cast were great too, with Jakki Henderson's tavern wench Flossie, the cheeky Eenie and Meenie (Kaci Payne and Scott Henderson) and the seasoned Mrs Drake (Angela Stride) all adding to the pace. With able and varied accompaniment provided by Richard Barrell, this show had all the elements of an excellent pantomime.

CAST: Queen Elizabeth-Simon Foster, Sir Walter Raleigh-Serena Lumley, Hon. Richard Clutterby-Sam Dare, William Shakespeare-Henry



■ THE finale

Dare, MacDonald-Ron Martin, Wimpy-Judy Martin, Sir Francis Drake-Kirsten McIlroy, Anna-Lauren Shepherd, Jack-Flora McIlroy, Flossie-Jakki Henderson, Mrs. Drake-Angela Stride, Georgia Ramsey-Imy Payne, King Philip-Robbi Robson, Princess Carolina-Lynette Burrough, Duke of Parma-Katy Henderson, Jacinta-Lydia Hartnell, Juan-Tyler Payne, Eenie-Kaci Payne, Meenie-Scott Henderson, Flamenco



■ DRAKE marries Princess Carolina

Dancers-Molly Barrell, Nat Bruzon, Jason Hawkes, The Ruff Sisters-Flora McIlroy & Lauren Shepherd, Spanish Courtier-Jason Hawkes, Sir Loin Stakes-Nat Bruzon, Lady 'Still' Waiting-Jason Hawkes

PRODUCTION: Script-Nat Bruzon, Director-Jason Hawkes, Director's Assistants-Sam Dare and Molly Barrell, Producer-Nigel Cook, Production Co-ordinator-Robbi Robson, Musical Director-Richard Barrell, Prompt-Jill Bellamy, Wardrobe-Rose Shepherd & Janet Andrew, Asst Stage Manager-Molly Barrell, Stage Crew-Alan Hawkes, Set Design-Jason Hawkes, Lighting-Jon Swarbrick, Sound-Mike Beaman, Prop Masters-Ron & Judy Martin, Prop makers-David Dodd, Jim & Monica Gallantree, Jakki Henderson, Sam Dare, Kirsten McIlroy, Val Cooke, Judy & Ron Martin, Ship Construction-Bill Foster, Posters, tickets & programme-Melissa Taylor, Posters & ticket printing-Terry Worsley, Set painting-Roger Clements, Elly Jemison, Jakki, Katy & Scott Henderson, Sam Dare, Joy

Dodd, Chrissie Craker, Kirsten McIlroy, Catherine Macarthur, Ron & Judy Martin, Alan & Jason Hawkes, Chaperone-Julie Payne & Marilyn Burrough, Front of House team-Anne Sheppard (Manager), Bill Sheppard, David Warner, Keith Griffin, Jenny Beaman, Bill & Jean Foster, Rose Shepherd, Roger & Sarah Clemens, Raffle-Janet Andrew & Felicity Hartnell, Refreshments-cast-Julie Payne, Bar-The Meeting Place, Box Office-Membury Post Office.



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Get ahead in the greenhouse

MAKE the most of the first sunny day to give your greenhouse a good clean if you plan to start sowing seeds soon.

A clean greenhouse means plants will be less vulnerable to pests and diseases and, if you zap them now, your undercover growing area won't become a breeding ground for nuisances.

Before you start, take out as much as you can and turn off the power to electric points, covering them to stop any water splashing them.

The best tools for cleaning the outside are a good

hose and a long-handled soft-bristled brush for tackling the roof glass, using a large sponge. Give it a good rub to remove algae and, if panes overlap, use an old plant label to ease out the dirt and then rinse the area with a hose. Replace cracked or broken panes or get a professional to do it if you don't feel confident.

Clear greenhouse gutters, removing soggy leaves and debris which could end up in water butts or block your drains. Get a long-handled brush to get rid of the rubbish before it enters the downpipes.

Once the greenhouse is empty, give the floor a really good sweep and get rid of clutter like broken pots, out-of-date feeds and other junk.

Wipe down surfaces with a scouring sponge and wash flower pots and seed trays with disinfectant before thoroughly rinsing and returning to their place in the greenhouse.

Horticulturist Frances Tophill, co-presenter of ITV's Love Your Garden and guest speaker at the forthcoming Edible Garden Show in Warwickshire, says: "The art of a good greenhouse is to have a more or less constant temperature."

"In the winter, a heater might be required or a little bubble wrap on the glass. Plants will suffer most

if their foliage is in direct contact with the cold glass, so move them away during the winter months."

The warmth provided in a greenhouse will help a multitude of insects to overwinter in the warm and come back with gusto in the spring to attack your plants.

"To avoid that happening, give your greenhouse a big winter clean-up, paying particular attention to any standing water where larvae may well be multiplying."

Now is the time to think about growing your early vegetables.

"Early carrots and parsnips (make sure you use one that is canker resistant) are ideal to start in February," says Tophill. "It's also a great time to start your garlic and small onions or shallots. If you have the luxury of a greenhouse then now is the time for growing all your tomatoes, peppers and aubergines."

"Also grow radishes, brassicas and all your peas, including late sweet peas. Now is also the time to get that summer bedding going. So start sowing cleome, dahlias, ricinus (castor oil plant), snapdragons and cerinthe."

Many plants just need the protection of a frost-free environment to germinate, so can be grown in a non-heated greenhouse or in a cold frame.

"Some seeds actually need a period of intense cold known as stratification before they will germinate. So it is all a matter of looking at your seeds, reading the packets carefully and treating them accordingly."

"If you only have a non-heated greenhouse, I always find a windowsill in the kitchen works a treat!"



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what's on in and around the Blackdown Hills

Duo bring contemporary classical to church

KLIO Bonz (on flute) and Siobhan Swider (on harp) are a musical pairing known as Amalthea Duo.

Their ethereal music will be floating up into the rafters a Blackdowns Church this March.

After training at Trinity College of Music in London, the glamorous young duo joined forces to tour their uplifting brand of contemporary classical music and in the past have mesmerised audiences at Buckingham Palace, Kensington Palace and the Houses of Parliament.

"I played for Nelson Mandela. He was lovely, very sweet," says American-born Siobhan. He said, 'Thank you, Harpist' and gave me a copy of his autobiography even though his hearing wasn't great so I don't think he heard too much of it."

Siobhan has played her harp at a birthday party for Sharon Osborne at Claridges and an art gallery where Cheri Blair was the guest of honour.

She has also played for the Queen and Prince Charles.

This will be their first time touring Devon.

Their show "Flute and Harp Fantasia" isn't just music.

"We share anecdotes about each piece and its composer, including short poems," adds Klio. "One of our composers, Devon based Barry Mills, is actually attending one of our Villages in Action shows."

This interaction with living composers is something that the duo specialise in. As well as performing favourites from Mozart and Debussy, the pair try to switch mainstream audiences on to

contemporary classical music too.

Their tour is partly funded by Villages in Action (ViA), the scheme that creates art encounters for villagers across Devon, and is something of a first for Villages in Action in that every venue is a church.

ViA is a charity whose work Klio and Siobhan consider very important.

"Art in any kind of form takes people to places inside themselves which they would maybe not have access to otherwise," Klio said.

"Art enables us to get in touch with emotions we never thought existed, memories we thought lost and it gives us some wonderful inspirations. Art simply makes our lives richer."

Amalthea Duo will be performing Flute and Harp Fantasia on Sat 5th March at St Michael's Church, Awliscombe from 7.30pm, (Tickets 01404 45145)

To find out about more live music and performance in a village hall near you, visit www.villagesinaction.co.uk.



■ KLIO Bonz (on flute) and Siobhan Swider (on harp)

diary dates

■ SHELTON Village Hall is hosting its final Villages In Action event of the winter on Thursday, March 31st at 7.30pm, when Namvula and her musicians will be performing.

Namvula creates an intrepid new musical world where the folk and urban traditions of her Zambian homeland combine with her Scottish heritage and London's vibrant music scene.

Namvula's music draws you into different worlds, yet remains firmly rooted in African soil and in the storytelling traditions of folk music.

Namvula has worked with some of the UK's most respected African and jazz musicians and her songs speak out on issues facing modern-day Africa, as well as exploring stories about society, life and love.

Tickets (£9 adult, £5 child) are available from John Carr 01404-841367.

■ CLAYHIDON Village Hall will be hosting it's next film night on Friday, March 11th at 7.30pm.

The film this month will be "Everest" (certificate 12A), in which a star-studded cast recreates the 1996 Everest disaster. Tickets are £6 or £20 family (two adults and two children). Email lucy-ball132@btinternet.com

To include your Diary Date in the paper email the details to alex@tindlenews.co.uk.

Don't forget to include the date, time, place, organiser's name and a brief description of the event.

Comedy comes to Dunkeswell

COMEDIAN, Mervyn Stutter, will be coming to Dunkeswell this March with an exuberant and life-affirming set about the trials of getting older.

Stutter, founding member of the Flying Pickets, is a veteran of BBC TV and Radio comedy, with a string of credits from *Stop the Week* to

Punt and Dennis. Accompanied by his guitar, he hosts the longest running comedy show at the Edinburgh Fringe.

Mervyn Stutter's *Utterly Stutterly* show will be at Dunkeswell Village Hall on Saturday, March 12th at 7.30pm (tickets available from 01404 891 677).



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Forde Abbey & Gardens

FORDE Abbey comes as a wonderful surprise to many people, as it's almost hidden down the lanes in this area of outstanding natural beauty – unless you happen to see the tallest fountain in England spouting above the surrounding trees!

The Plant & Gardening Fair on Sunday 6th March falls on Mothering Sunday this year, so there will be an extra attraction – in addition to the 30 stalls of plants and gardening sundries – of free posy-tying workshops. With all sorts of plants on sale – from the a of alpines to the b of bamboo, the c of climbers and so on – there is sure to be inspiration and temptation for everyone. The Tearoom will be serving tasty home-made cakes and light lunches, and the Eeles Pottery will open a new selling exhibition.

With lots of new events this year, there is plenty for everyone. Children under 15 have free admission to Forde Abbey and are sure to enjoy a new version of the traditional Easter Egg Hunt, inter-acting with Mrs Tiggy-Winkle and her friends who will provide intriguing clues to follow.

Thousands of crocus carpet the lawns in February and March, with many other spring bulbs also to be seen around these award-winning gardens – all harbingers of even more glories to come throughout the year. No less



than 25,000 tulips will bloom during the Tulip Festival, when renowned floral designer Mig Kimpton will be demonstrating his craft, followed by afternoon tea.

More information about all the events all-year-round can be found on the website www.fordeabbey.co.uk or by emailing info@fordeabbey.co.uk

Forde Abbey is situated 4 miles to the south-east of Chard and is signposted from the A30 and A358. The Gardens are open daily from 10am – 4.30pm (last admission) and the House is open from 24th March to 30th October on Tuesdays-Fridays, Sundays, and Bank Holiday Mondays, from 12 noon with last admission at 4pm.

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Norton Fitzwarren, Taunton

£760,000

A home with income. A beautifully presented modern 4 double bedroom home set on the outskirts of Norton Fitzwarren. A detached gym and garage as well as other outbuildings set in about 3.3 acres. There are 3 self-contained suites with an income potential. The suites are currently used for B&B purposes.



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£725,000

Grade II Listed Detached home in very popular village of Halse. This home has been carefully looked after by the current owners and is offered in good decorative order and has received regular attention to the thatch. The property benefits from mature gardens and a lovely courtyard to the rear. There is a stream running through the grounds and the paddock is accessed over a wooden bridge (The paddock is circa. 5 acres of level grassland with its own access). Briefly comprising: 3 reception rooms, 5 bedrooms, kitchen, family bathroom, 2 Shower Rooms, 1 bed annexe, 2 garages.



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Thorncombe - £239,950

A stunning 2 bedroom character property over three floors in the heart of the much sought after village of Thorncombe. The property has been refurbished to a very high standard whilst retaining the original character features of the building. Comprises: Sitting room/dining room, kitchen, master bedroom with ensuite, further double bedroom, bathroom, garden, central heating and double glazing throughout.

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